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ABSTRACT

This book offers suggestions and guidelines for elementary school teachers in the areas of: (1) reading instruction; (2) teacher-student conferences and guidance programs; (3) discipline; (4) truancy; (5) busing; (6) teacher orientation; (7) school opening and closing; (8) physical education and intramural programs; (9) field trips; (10) study laboratories and centers; (11) instructional materials and audiovisual aids; (12) effective use of school library; (13) school staff meetings; (14) teacher evaluation and teacher-principal relationship; (15) team teaching; (16) community resources; (17) assembly meetings; (18) Parent Teacher Association; and (19) parent conferences. The book concludes with a reproduction of a speech delivered by the author on the "Adolescent's Perception of Failure." (JD)

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**HOW TO IMPROVE
YOUR EFFECTIVENESS
AS AN
ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL TEACHER**

**NEW ANSWERS TO
LINGERING PROBLEMS**

**BY
WILLIAM A. KRITSONIS**

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DEDICATION

This book is gratefully dedicated to Donald S. Blair, Professor of Education at Seattle Pacific College. Professor Blair's understanding leadership, contribution and service to the education profession will last forever in many hearts and his endless enthusiasm will sing out forever in my soul.

WILLIAM A. KRITSONIS

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P R E F A C E

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR EFFECTIVENESS AS AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER contains valuable suggestions that will be practical for the experienced elementary teacher and the beginning teacher alike. Even though the suggestions offered are excellent, each educator reading this book will be forced to decide for himself if they will help him do a better job in the elementary classroom.

Hopefully, this book will be valuable for all elementary teachers. It will help them overcome many difficulties in the classroom while it offers creative techniques for all that find themselves at the elementary level.

WILLIAM A. KRITSONIS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is indeed my pleasure to take this unique opportunity to express my deepest appreciation to all people that devotedly concerned themselves with my personal and professional development.

A PRECEEDING THOUGHT

This author would like to begin this book with a quote from William James (1842-1910), the foremost leader of the Pragmatic school of philosophy and probably America's most outstanding psychologist. His ingenious ability to explain his thoughts in an interesting and understandable manner, made his appearances on the lecture platform at Harvard University most popular.

"Let no youth have any anxiety about the upshot (conclusion) of his education, whatever the line of it may be. If he keeps faithfully busy each hour of the working day, he may safely leave the final result to itself. He can, with perfect certainty, count on waking up some fine morning to find himself one of the competent ones of his generation, in whatever pursuit he may have singled out."

—WILLIAM JAMES

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William A. Kritsonis is an intelligent, young and highly enthusiastic educator with tremendously creative action-packed ideas. He has excellent elementary teaching experience and has constructive ideas to offer to the area of elementary education. In his book, William includes valuable suggestions that are priceless, practical and meaningful for the experienced and beginning elementary teacher.

Upon graduating from Seattle's own Lincoln High School in 1964, Bill enrolled at Everett Junior College where he later received the A.A. Degree in General Studies. After Everett, he transferred to Central Washington State College in Ellensburg, Washington, and received the B.A. Degree of Education in the spring of 1969.

After graduating, Bill was immediately employed in the Evergreen State of Washington serving as an elementary teacher. He spent two years in the Renton School District and his third year with the Peninsula School District, Gig Harbor, Washington.

During the cold winter months of 1970, while in his first year of teaching, Bill began evening classes at Seattle Pacific College to begin course work leading to the masters degree. During his graduate studies at Seattle Pacific College, Bill had the opportunity to work with many leading experts in the field of elementary education including a specialist in early childhood education. In August, 1971, Bill was granted the degree of Master of Education from Seattle Pacific College, with his major area of concentration being the Master's Degree Program in Elementary

Education With Creative Education Emphasis. In January, 1972, the energetic young educator was awarded the certificate of meeting the required standards for completion of the Dale Carnegie Course in Effective Speaking and Human Relations as set forth by Dale Carnegie Associates, Inc.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR EFFECTIVENESS AS AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER comes to you out of the burning desire Bill has to offer something practical to all elementary teachers across these United States of America and to the field of education. Presently on the staff at The University of Iowa, as a Special Area Research Assistant in Education, in the College of Education, Bill happily offers his book to you, hoping it will help you improve your effectiveness in the elementary school.

CHAPTER I

**HOW THE
ELEMENTARY TEACHER
DEVELOPS A
GOOD READING PROGRAM**

One of the very first basic responsibilities of the elementary teacher is to develop a good reading program. He must feel absolutely confident in the reading program that he puts into operation in his classroom. We in elementary education know for a fact, more than anyone else, that reading instruction is the golden key to many unlocked doors.

In studies throughout the United States concerning dropouts and reading, school dropouts became disenchanted, fed-up, utterly disgusted and discouraged in school, because they could not read very well. This is a fact! A fact teachers of elementary children are not proud of. But is there still hope? Yes! Numerous school districts now employ full time specialists in reading instruction and many schools even have their own reading specialists. But is this the answer we seek in order to solve this major problem? No it is not! If we, in the elementary school, can more successfully meet the needs and demands of students in reading, then indeed many school systems would save money, not having to spend more on reading specialists at the junior and senior high levels.

The elementary teacher should study, investigate and evaluate many different types of reading programs. After evaluating these programs he should talk with other teachers and the school principal about the strengths, weaknesses, advantages and disadvantages of the various reading programs that have been examined. We learn a great deal when we take the time to discuss reading programs among ourselves. When teachers take an active part in the selection of reading programs, they become more actively involved in the total reading program once it is put in total operation.

If at all possible, a representative should be contacted that will give a demonstration to those desiring to put the particular reading program into operation. We should also visit a school that is currently using the program to observe it in live action. We should talk with teachers that are using it, discussing with them the strengths and weakness of the program.

Many fine articles are published each month that concern themselves with the evaluation of various reading programs. We should consult these articles often. If articles are not readily

available, perhaps, we may contact the local newspaper for help, consult educational bulletins, libraries, magazines or talk with parents that are interested in reading.

We must have an atmosphere created in our classrooms that radiates that reading is a major activity. Bookclubs, posters, pageants, fairs, plays, book reports and book displays, all help tremendously to strengthen our classroom's reading program.

As elementary teachers, we should constantly be on the lookout for the opportunity to express appreciation to our students when they show the slightest improvement in reading. If we do this, we cannot help but make reading a most enjoyable and happy part of the school day.

Students have new ideas and we should respect them. When a student has a new idea concerning reading, don't clamp down on him. Let him at least try it out. One of our prime functions as teachers, is to help students realize their new ideas.

Reading instruction seems to be more enjoyable in the morning, although many students prefer to read in the afternoon. It is recommended by this writer that primary students read in the morning whereas intermediate youngsters read either in the morning or afternoon. Each teacher must decide whether to have his formal reading in the morning or afternoon. Some of us have reading twice a day, once for the children that want to read in the morning and once in the afternoon for others desiring to read in the afternoon.

We in the elementary school should have detailed instructional plans for the teaching of basic reading skills. We should have an understanding of the skills in reading that are vital to our particular grade level. We should be familiar with the reading requirements children passed through during the preceding year as well as studying the reading skills they will need after they leave our classroom.

We realize that children that cannot read very well should be in very small groups. The small reading groups whose members are slow give us more time to work with its members. Reading

strengths and reading limits of these strengths should be known to us if we sincerely desire to do a good job in the classroom.

One way of finding where a child is in reading is to have the child read, then, just at the moment the child begins to have difficulty, stop him. Then, the next reading period, start where he left off. Above all, a child must not be expected to read materials that is beyond his grasp. Many children attempt to read material that is too difficult for them. We should be aware of this tragedy. We must continue to explore newer and better ways of finding out where children are reading in our class.

Oral reading is aided tremendously by using a tape recorder. When the tape is played back to the student, he suddenly realizes his own mistakes while he also increases his reading comprehension.

Too often we in elementary schools around the nation forget how emotional problems severely hamper reading abilities of thousands of children. Poor health, physical drawbacks, personal background experiences, and many more all play a vital part in determining a child's ability to read the printed word. Of course, there are many other kinds of problems that must be discovered and corrected before real growth and enjoyment in reading can grow. It is a difficult task, but we in the elementary classrooms must continue to work extremely hard to solve many of these kinds of problems. It is a never ending battle, but one that has been too much neglected in the past.

Children lack many skills and it is our responsibility to have these skills worked on. There, of course, are numerous skills that must be mastered by all students, among them are phonics, note taking, outlining, map interpretations, detail reading, spelling, oral reading, auditory and visual discrimination, word recognition and word analysis, reading rate, information pinpointing, reading critically, vocabulary and comprehension skills, along with many more too numerous to mention here.

Another area we should concern ourselves in is flexibility in reading. We should guide children so they are reading a wide variety of materials, not just a few.

Practically all reading is done for a specific purpose. The

purpose may be for enjoyment or it may be for academic reasons. Regardless of the purpose, classroom discussions offer children the opportunity to develop and master special vocabulary areas.

The kind of reading children do is very important. It should be varied enough to include textbooks. When reading textbooks, they should be taught how to spot important concepts, ideas and facts, along with other essential illustrations.

Reading groups should be highly organized. If students feel they are not well-planned, they will become disinterested. The total reading program offers in itself, ways to bring the total class together as one unit. Reading clubs, library clubs, a week for reading special books, story telling, all keep the reading program alive, exciting, exhilarating and full of meaning.

When the teacher feels that his reading program is successful, he then may want to set-up a reading laboratory. In the laboratory should be materials that are challenging to the reader with vocabularies that are not too easy and yet not too difficult. All materials in the reading lab should be checked by the teacher. Slides, films and film strips, tapes and other materials may also be included. Film projectors may be purchased or they may be rented to enhance the reading laboratory. Books for extension reading are excellent as are corrective readers. Paperback books are excellent at all elementary levels, they pack interest for the reader. Vocabulary cards, phonetic flash-cards and phonetic charts, sets of supplementary readers, along with other audio-visual materials can also be used. Word cards, books for general reading, picture cards and reading texts, manuals for basic textbooks, all go well in establishing the good elementary reading laboratory.

Teachers should remember that many parents are interested in reading and some would greatly welcome the opportunity to come into our classrooms and help in the reading laboratory. Parents can aid us in a number of ways, one of which is listening to children read out loud.

There are always children with special problems in reading. Eye charts, pacers or controlled readers are excellent in helping these children overcome some of their reading problems. A Tachistoscope and Ophthalemmograph prove most effective in helping

remedial problems. We must be sure to help these special children as well as children with lesser abilities.

It is extremely important for us not to be ignorant of the new approaches that will improve reading instruction for our students. Various new individualized reading programs should be studied. We should be on the lookout for the reading skills taught in these individualized programs, along with examining the basic textbooks being used. Also, vocabulary builders and interest catching factors of the total individualized reading program should be taken into consideration when the teacher is evaluating.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

If a man empties his purse into his head, no one can take it from him.

—FRANKLIN

CHAPTER II

**HOW TO DEVELOP
A SUCCESSFUL
GUIDANCE PROGRAM
IN THE
ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM**

The successful guidance of children is another responsibility that we in elementary education must accept. As dedicated teachers, we should put forth a total effort to be certain that each child adjusts successfully to the classroom and the school. We can take this a step further by helping the children adjust to the community. When this type of guidance program is successful, children feel security, emotional stability, great personal satisfaction and individual growth in the realization of their learning potentials.

Teachers should understand the purposes of the guidance program that he wants to administer in his classroom. The guidance program should be well prepared and organized. We should inform the principal about the program that we are making an effort to put into operation; perhaps the principal will offer helpful suggestions if he is consulted.

A place should be set aside in the classroom so that teacher-student conferences can be an integral part of the total classroom program. When the teacher is sitting in this area, this indicates to the child that his teacher is available just to talk with him. Those of us that are good listeners, solve many problems before they happen.

If accumulative records are to be of any use, they should contain:

1. Extra-curricular activities the child participates in.
2. Results of various standardized tests.
3. Positive comments. If negative comments appear, the teacher and principal decide if they should be taken out of the child's record. We hope negative comments by teachers are not put into children's files.
4. Information concerning health.
5. Grade reports and other records.
6. Other personal data.

We should recognize that each child is a unique individual. The child does have certain basic desires and needs to satisfy along with personal goals he wants to achieve. We should re-

member all of the students when planning an activity and not just a chosen few favorites.

If standardized tests are administered, the teacher should look at their results. Above all, it should be abundantly clear that we know how to interpret the scores of these tests and how to relate them to our methods of instruction so that we can develop positive kinds of lessons that will help children overcome their learning difficulties. Standardized tests must be positive and never used negatively.

Finding out who the leaders are in the classroom is very important to us. Sociograms of a simple nature can aid the teacher in locating the leadership qualities in the class. Like everything else, leadership can be negative and positive. If negative qualities are found early enough, many disorders may be corrected. If positive qualities are found, academic excellence may be striven for as a total functional goal for a particular student.

The guidance program should include personality development as well. Personality development is built by us and reinforced by academic success in school for the child. We should remember that mental health plays a vital part in the personality development of the child and that opportunities should be provided during the day for this important development.

There are three major areas that develop the individual growth of the total child. They are:

1. Physical growth — he must have the finest physical health possible for him.
2. Emotional stability — he must have respect as an individual and feel security in maintaining this respect.
3. Academic achievement — the potential he is seeking must be real to him.

The teacher should remember these areas and strive to learn more about them so that he will become better equipped as an educator. We should continue to read and learn more about child growth and development.

It is extremely important for us to remember the names of the children in our class. We must also remember the names of

others that are not in our class. We all know how embarrassing it is for a teacher to meet a child and his parents in public and not be able to remember their child's name, especially when their boy or girl remembers your name so well. A child's name is the most important possession that he has in some cases. Please remember this.

We can improve human relations in the community if children's parents understand the guidance program that is in operation in the classroom. We should make every effort to help parents understand its significance.

In the guidance of children, we should give our class ultimate attention. We must stay ahead of problems before they occur. We should study case studies so that we will gain better insight at solving other problems that could possibly present themselves in the future.

We get many helpful suggestions and ideas concerning classroom guidance programs from good teacher discussions and from interested members of the community. We must be intelligent enough so that we do not go off half-cocked with an idea. Suggestions that might aid our guidance program should come from very reliable sources. School counselors are excellent sources of information. The school psychologist may also be consulted for additional helpful information concerning our guidance program.

One way to approach guidance in the classroom is to have committees made up entirely of children. The teacher and children select various topics for discussion and the students talk freely about them. The teacher should be objective in his analysis of the discussions that grow, while appraisals of the discussions are conducted in a respectable manner. We do not barge into these discussions. They are the children's discussions and not ours. If the children desire your help, then by all means, offer your services as a consultant.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

Educate men without religion, and you make them but clever devils.

—WELLINGTON

CHAPTER III

**HOW TO HANDLE
DISCIPLINE SUCCESSFULLY
IN THE
ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM**

We in the elementary classroom discover immediately that behaviorial problems will be reduced greatly if we place more and more responsibility on the shoulders of the children for their own personal behavior. Another of our responsibilities is maintaining high morale, and if problems do come up, they should be dealt with accordingly.

Positive measures should be taken by us if we are to avoid and prevent problems. At all elementary grade levels, children must be expected to be accountable for their behavior and for what they do. Children should be dealt with quickly, fairly, and of course, honestly. In this process, we must let each child know in some personal way that his teacher has faith in him as a person.

As we are reading these pages, you should begin right now to make allowances for gradual change from the supervising and policing of children to allowing these children to accept responsibility for their own behavior and actions that result from their misbehavior. We can be instrumental by having less teacher supervision in such places as the cafeteria during lunch or if students eat their lunches in the room, even in the halls and during class discussions. When we feel confident enough in our students that they are indeed accepting responsibility for their own actions of their behavior, then the teacher should praise and congratulate them in a sincere and honest manner.

The newspaper may be used as an excellent additional tool by the elementary teacher to help solve disciplinary problems before they occur. The class can read about the good things people do along with reading about the many horrible things people do. By reading about the good and the bad, students will see the benefits of behaving, for they will realize for themselves that many people, more times than not, cause their own problems.

We should be very alert when we find students that are failing to accept responsibility. When this happens, we should not criticize the entire group. The individual or individuals should be dealt with separately away from the total group setting. We must remember that even though we may be disciplining a few

students because of misconduct, the other class members are doing great! Because these other children are doing satisfactorily, we must continue to give hearty praise to them. We can never give too much praise!

We should conduct the affairs of the classroom in such a way that children feel they are extremely lucky and that it is a privilege to come to school each day. We do not brag about the school or ourselves in order to accomplish this. We accomplish this by doing our job to the best of our ability and children will not want to stay home from school by faking illness. Children will realize for themselves that by faking illness, they are only hurting themselves, and they don't want to do that.

Of course there are always a few students that seem to be absent from school continually. Our role as counselor thus comes into play here. We should inform the child of the extreme dangers he is doing to himself by not attending school regularly. Some absences are unavoidable, but many more absences than we realize are due to poor emotional outlooks toward school.

We are all caught up with obtaining from children required excuses for absences. We would be doing ourselves a big favor and we would be doing the principal a big favor if we pointed out the fact that by requiring excuses for absences, often makes liars out of parents and their children.

We should have definite disciplinary policies established in our classrooms. These policies should spring from the children and teacher jointly. The children explain how they think policies should be enforced and the teacher explains to the children how he feels policies should be enforced. It is our responsibility to shuffle all of the information gathered so the policies put into operation will meet our professional needs along with satisfying the personal needs of the children in the class.

Those of us that are most effective in the disciplining of children are the ones that style the punishment to the offender. We accomplish this by relating to the child that punishment is not done for spite, but that it is done because of certain specific reasons. These reasons should be explained fully to the child

before the punishment is administered. We must make certain the child understands that we like him but we do not like his behavior.

One fantastic rule for us to follow is never to punish or discipline a child when we are angry. This protects both the child and the teacher. We must contact the principal if we have thoughts of punishing a child in an unusual kind of way.

We are always on the lookout for children that are having severe problems in school. We should conference with these children. Correcting problems is much harder than preventing them before they become actual realities. Many behavioral problems would have never become realities if we only had taken the time to prevent them before they happened.

When children are having extreme difficulties in adapting to school, they should feel absolutely confident their teacher will stand behind them. We should contact other teachers in the school whose children are conflicting with ours so that problem situations can be corrected immediately. If these kinds of problems are not dealt with immediately, they will soon get out of control. Problems should never get out of control if we are trying to the best of our ability to solve them.

If problems continue to exist, it is our responsibility to contact parents so they can cooperate in correcting their child's behavioral problems. Before we make any telephone calls to parents, the principal should first be contacted and told the problem. Embarrassment may be prevented by contacting the principal or counselor beforehand, for they might offer us helpful suggestions in dealing with the problem before it gets to the parents.

When the child gives any indication that he is improving his misbehavior, we should immediately contact the parents. By getting the parents involved, we can usually rest assured the child will be encouraged to improve his own misbehavior at home as well as at school.

Getting children to accept responsibility in the elementary school is a continual uphill battle and it is one battle with which every teacher should concern himself. When children have problems, we should help them establish goals they can achieve for their own individual development.

The sooner we realize that corporal punishment is useless and a waste of time, that it solves very few problems, the better off we will be in dealing with students. If corporal punishment is to be administered, it should be administered as a last resort. We should not spank a child unless we have the written consent of the child's parents. We should never administer corporal punishment in or about the child's head or face. When corporal punishment is administered, it is the teacher's prime responsibility to make absolutely certain there is a witness present to observe the punishment. This witness must be a certified school district employee.

We should never threaten a child unless we are ready and able to follow through with the threat. Rules for the classroom and school should be clearly spelled out for the children. Firmness is a must with children at first, later of course, the teacher may loosen the ropes. Some teachers create their own problems if they begin in an easy and relaxed manner, and then expect to put the clamps down on the children when trouble presents itself.

Many disciplinary problems are solved when we take the time once each week to discuss with our class good sportsmanship and courtesy. Courtesy is one aspect that is presently being very much neglected on the part of many of us in the classroom. We should take the time each week to discuss various incidents where good sportsmanship and courtesy have played an important role in phases of adjustment. We in elementary education, fully realize that general personal conduct must also be discussed with children along with the presenting of our subject matter

We should remember that our example in the classroom and out of the classroom concerning honesty, courtesy and fairness will do much to aid us in helping to get our points across to children. The mature teacher has very few disciplinary problems when he himself is a shining example of honesty and courtesy.

If a child comes late to school, there are certain procedures he must go through. On the other hand, if a child skips school, it is the principal's responsibility and duty to administer the disciplinary action. If a child leaves school early or cuts out of the classroom unexpectedly, the teacher and principal should both

agree on measures to be taken in order to solve the problem. We may call the parents of the child or the principal may call the child's parents.

A short, brief and concise note home to the parents, either mailing it home or having the child take it home could be effective, as long as the note is signed by the parents and returned to the school. The returned signed note should be kept in the student's personal files in the school's office until the matter is corrected. A personal conference with the child's parents is always effective in solving difficulties.

When we are working with a particular student to improve that student's behavior, we should not spy on the student. If we spy on a child, it does more harm than good. We should trust the student's sense of fair play and his wanting to do the right thing. In most cases, children want to do the right thing.

There will always be problems in the classroom. When problems arise, we should maintain poise, always remembering to have consideration for the child. Demerits, detention corners and bad citations should be avoided, for they are a negative means of controlling behavioral problems. We should treat each and every disciplinary problem as an individual problem because each problem is a different problem. We should make the effort to understand the child's difficulty because the child will not understand your problem unless you first try to understand his problem. Children are funny that way.

We should have a classroom atmosphere that makes each child feel that he belongs in that particular classroom. A sense of belonging to a certain group of children and a teacher gives the child the sense of security that he needs. We should also take the necessary steps to develop group pride as well as individual pride. Group pride and individual student pride are very important in the successful elementary classrooms around these United States.

If we read the accumulative records of a child, we should do it to learn as much as possible about the home setting of the child. Being interested in the welfare of the child is our first step in wanting to help a child that is having difficulty in school.

Some teachers visit the homes of pupils who are sick. Others further display their interest in a child by attending an activity a child might be participating in whether it be in school or in the community.

Teachers should also realize that some problems need special attention in their classroom, and therefore we should never hesitate to call for assistance if the demands of the situation call for it. Counselors can help tremendously. The school psychologist, principal and nurse are employed to help and their services should be requested.

Each day we organize the classrooms learning activities so they will be done by children in an interesting manner. We should provide opportunities to create an atmosphere where children and teacher can cooperate in the selection of the various learning experiences that are to take place in the classroom. When we and the children cooperate in the selection of these various activities, it will be a positive force and it will be for the good of the entire class.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

The foundation of every state is the education of its youth.

—DIOGENES

CHAPTER IV

**HOW TO DISCOVER
DROPOUTS
BEFORE THEY
COPOUT**

Teachers should provide challenging and rewarding school experiences for each child so they will not want to stay home from school. We should help each child to develop an awareness of his own self worth and of the contribution he has the *opportunity* to make to his society.

The teacher, through his daily taking of attendance, can often identify potential dropouts. We realize that a happy and contented child rarely chooses to become a school dropout and is seldom a problem in our classroom.

We must begin corrective tactics toward potential dropouts before their dropping out of school becomes a fact of reality of coping out. If we notice chronic absenteeism, low achievement (especially in the area of reading or mathematics), economic problems of the family, lack of ability in making friends and influencing friends, disciplinary problems and general apathetic views towards school, then we must begin to help solve these problems aggressively in a positive way.

To help encourage children that are absent from school, we may wish to telephone children at their home at the end of the regular school day or during the school day. When we call the home and talk with the child or parent, the absentee soon discovers that his teacher does care about him when he is not in school. We find that calling children at home soon influences parents in developing more positive attitudes toward the activities that are going on at school. When we call the home, we should matter of factly, emphasize the value of attendance at school to the parent or child. Parents like this suggestive kind of approach, rather than having some teacher trying to tell them what they ought to do. Parents usually cooperate wholeheartedly when approached in this manner.

All of us in the elementary classrooms must recognize that each child is a very unique individual, and therefore, each child's absence should be treated as such. The needs of the child that is having problems in getting to school in the morning should be of the utmost importance when the teacher handles the total problem. We should continually emphasize to the child, without harping, the extreme importance of establishing good attendance

records. Our knowledgeable resources from courses in child psychology will do great wonders in getting our point across to the child.

Probably the most effective approach we can use to our best advantage are visitations to the homes of children that are absent continually. Children from the class may visit the homes of children that are absent, thus serving and helping to reach the potential school dropout. Dropout characteristics in children at the elementary level are there, but sometimes they completely vanish when peers take part in home visitations with the teacher.

We should arrange our curriculum offerings in such a way so the student will honestly experience academic achievement. This personal growth is another area where we should arrange so that children may experience its benefits. Depth and breadth of the curriculum should constantly be evaluated by us if we are to maintain a high quality educational program.

Individualizing instruction falls on many persons' shoulders, but it falls heaviest on the shoulders of each of us in the classroom. We should remember that we never criticize any child who is having difficulties adjusting or fitting himself into an individualized program. We must keep in mind that many children are not mature enough to be placed in such academic programs.

Unfortunately, our present system of education in these United States does not meet the present needs of many children, and there are many who are held back each school year and retained. These children should be given special attention to see they have success in the classroom. These children themselves give justification to us that we are responsible to make absolutely certain they come into contact with interesting, challenging, stimulating and newer materials.

To encourage children from copping out of school, we should be five times as enthusiastic as we normally appear. Special provisions should be made in the curriculum both for the above average student and the learner that is slower. Curriculum offerings should be non-threatening for children. Enthusiasm is another golden key to teaching and we must strive to maintain a high

level of quality enthusiasm throughout each and every teaching day of the entire school year.

The classroom, school building and grounds should be kept clean, neat and attractive at all times for the children. Children should take an active part in the maintenance of the school grounds. This gives each child a sense of pride in his school's total environmental setting. This kind of student participation will provide high school spirit that will spread through the entire student body, and this spirit could be carried over into junior and senior high school.

One way that we in elementary education may help children that are having attendance problems, is to give them the responsibility of taking attendance. Other activities that children may take part in attendance taking are drama, sports, creative dramatics, music and assemblies. These are excellent extra-curricular activities that children who are having problems in attendance, can take part.

We may want to have contests each month during the school year in hopes of stimulating children to want to attend school more regularly. Recognition should be given to children that show signs of any attendance improvement.

Teachers should have definite provisions set up for school work that is missed due to absence. These provisions should be fair and reasonable, emphasizing clearly to the child the importance of attending school regularly. Above all, we must make sure that children make up work they have missed.

We should acquaint parents on the importance of having their child attend school regularly by simply telephoning them or by sending home a friendly informative newsletter. Parents of children having chronic absenteeism problems may become involved in the classroom as teacher assistants. By working as teacher assistants, they will hopefully become more involved in the total schools educational program. By becoming actively involved in school, parents will become more responsible for their own child's education.

There will still be children that require more attention than others no matter how much one tries to help them. The child

having problems in various subject areas should have the opportunity to experience success in the classroom. A block of time should be set up where this child can study one particular subject area. We should watch this child, and when we see the child experiencing success, we must praise him lavishly. We also should counsel with the child so the child and you may identify personal goals and ways to achieve these goals. In these important counseling sessions, we should help the child discover ways of handling personal difficulties.

When, we as teacher, counsel with a child, we should involve the parents if we think it will be beneficial to the child. Parents enjoy taking part in the establishing of long range goals, concerns and objectives. Planning is extremely important, and the child, parents and teacher should take an active part in this planning. Of course, the teacher is the professional and it should be expected that we be aware of how to plan with parents.

Other children in the class may often help tutor children that are having difficulties in school. They can help them by talking with them about school attendance or they may help them with their homework. People from the community may be used most effectively at helping students become more interested in school and the community surrounding the school.

Another important aspect for us to remember is to support summer reading programs, especially in the primary grades. Primary reading problems if not dealt with properly and systematically, may cause children to want to dropout and copout of school later on.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

He is to be educated not because he is to make shoes, nails and pins, but because he is a man.

—CHANNING

CHAPTER V

**HOW TO HANDLE
BUSING PROBLEMS**

Education in these United States is ever changing and the transportation of children becomes vitally important for the schools around the nation. If transporting or busing is to be successful, the teacher in the classroom can help tremendously in reducing the problems that busing creates.

It is important for us to be well informed of the standard regulations pertaining to bus transportation. We should either ask our principal for these regulations or write to the state department of education for a booklet on the rules and regulations, laws and other pertinent information.

Dismissing children when the bell sounds is sometimes a problem. One of the responsibilities we have after children vacate the classroom is to carefully supervise the loading of the children on the bus. Some schools have a rotating list where teachers take turns at accepting the responsibility for the supervision of children. Teachers can eliminate many problems by supervising the arrival of buses. In any case, the conscientious teacher assumes the responsibility of organizing the departure of his children each day along with accepting the additional responsibility of greeting his students each and every day with a warm and friendly smile.

To eliminate further problems we should make a time schedule list for each of the buses and post it in the room. This will result in the children taking the responsibility of knowing when they are to expect the bus to arrive, where they meet the bus in the morning, and when the bus will drop them off after school. We may have the bus driver explain the above items to the children at the beginning of the school year.

Misconduct on the bus always presents itself as a problem. We should take the child accused of misconduct and then seek to take positive corrective measures. If the problem persists, we should contact the bus monitor (if there is one), and bus driver so that we can get additional facts so that we can attempt to solve the problem. If we cannot solve the problem after consulting with the bus monitor and bus driver, then we must contact the principal and secure his advice and opinion on the situation.

If the teacher contacts the parents of the child, he should ask for their full cooperation in the busing problem and we

should explain to them that you personally are trying to look out for the safety of their child. We should explain that bus transportation and safety rules are extremely important for each child to remember and practice each day.

If bus problems continue, we secure information that can be supplied to the parents which is factual. This information should be first hand information about the special problems so the imparting of it to parents is highly accurate.

When minor problems concerning the general safety of bus-ing come up, we should discuss these problems with our class. We should explain to the children why the bus picks them up where it does and why it follows a certain route each day. This is an excellent opportunity to provide helpful instructions regarding procedures for bus transportation. Primary teachers should be certain they give each child a number card at the beginning of the school year so they will be certain to get on the right bus. Awards for excellent conduct on the bus stimulate many children to act better.

One important point that we should stress to our students is the importance of having them wait for the bus. We must impress upon them that if they are waiting for the bus on a highway, they should stay off the highway until the bus pulls to a complete stop. This point can never be over emphasized!

Children should be expected to keep their bus clean. They can help to keep it clean by reminding the pupil next to them to keep it clean also. We should discuss with our children that there is no shoving, pushing, playing in the aisles, standing, throwing or yelling on the bus. If there is a very sincere and close relationship between the child, teacher and bus driver, this in itself will prevent many kinds of misbehavior problems.

Children should remember they never stand while the bus is in motion and they should understand they never stand to get off the bus until the bus driver gives the command. The responsible teacher explains to children that if the bus driver is forced to handle disciplinary problems while the bus is moving, then everyone on the bus will have their lives in jeopardy. Many children soon realize for themselves that good conduct may save many lives.

It is important for us to explain why bus lines are set up and why certain lines go on the bus before other lines. We should tell our students they could be called upon to help in a case of an emergency and the bus driver will pick only the people that have been good citizens on the bus. A good citizen might be asked to go for help if for some reason the bus breaks down.

If problems continue to linger on, parents should be notified by either the teacher, counselor or principal. Parents should be told of the procedures that go into action in the suspending of their child for misbehavior on the bus. These procedures should be clearly spelled out to the parents. It is important to remember that effective human relations are strengthened when basic procedures are spelled out clearly in the beginning.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

Repetition is the mother of education. —JEAN PAUL RICHTER

CHAPTER VI

**HOW TO MAKE
BEGINNING TEACHERS
AND NEW STAFF
FEEL WELCOME**

We can help new staff members and beginning teachers feel more welcome by genuinely becoming interested in helping them be successful in their new teaching role. If proper human relationships begin immediately, the alert teacher will have taken the necessary steps at boosting the morale of the school along with lessening the mental strains that are always present with new personnel.

We may be helpful to the new staff member or beginning teacher by making ourselves readily available just in case the new co-worker has any special questions to ask. For example, the newcomer usually has many concerns about his new position, salary schedules, absence procedures, payment of substitutes, contracts, insurance policies, health requirements, medical benefits and other regulations set forth by the school district, state and national associations.

Some school districts and communities do not like their teachers to smoke in public, drink in public or wear clothes that might be considered flashy. The experienced teacher should inform the new staff member of these little no-no's, no matter how foolish they are, before they make the mistake.

It is good to inform a new staff member about the recreational advantages and disadvantages of the area that he will be teaching and living in. We may suggest places where the teacher might look first if he should be interested in buying or renting a home or apartment.

New staff members are usually required to report to school early, and we should arrive before they arrive so that we can meet them. We welcome them honestly and sincerely and we offer to take the new employee on an informal tour of the school or perhaps take him for a quick ride around the local community. Most new teachers like to be pampered in this kind of way in the beginning. It makes them feel very important.

Often principals assign new staff members to experienced staff. The experienced staff member acts as a "Big Brother" or "Big Sister" or "My Buddy." It is extremely important to remember that when the principal asks for volunteers to help in the orientation of new teachers that we stand up immediately and

volunteer. It does not matter whether we are selected or not, the important thing to remember is that we are making ourselves available for the asking. By offering our services we will be furthering better human relationships between the present staff and the new staff.

When we are a buddy to a new staff member, we should go with the new teacher and offer assistance, information and ideas. We should not wait to be asked, but on the other hand, we should not be forward. We should drop in occasionally to visit informally with the new teacher and talk incidentally about how the day went at the close of the school day.

We can help new staff members plan their classwork by discussing instructional methods informally. Planning the first day as we all know is very important and we can help the new teacher tremendously by pointing out what he might expect to encounter on the first day.

Good teachers help the beginning teacher by helping him in anyway that they can so that his very first day of teaching will be successful for him. Helping the teacher plan may be done directly or indirectly. We can walk by the beginning teacher's room and offer our assistance and we will soon find that our concerns for the beginning teacher's success will be greatly appreciated by him even if he does not say so.

We should impress upon beginning teachers that when children are performing meaningful and worthwhile learning tasks they seldom become disciplinary problems. If at all possible, we should arrange observation periods for the new teacher where he may observe the experienced teacher in a classroom situation.

We should explain to new staff members very clearly that when children and parents ask for unusual requests of which he has no inkling of what to do, that he contact the principal immediately before making any decisions. It is very important the new staff member keep his principal informed about special requests.

It is very important for us to make the beginning teacher feel at ease when he is talking with us about classroom teaching.

A beginning teacher often feels insecure at the start of the school year and he needs the expert guidance from an experienced teacher who is conscientious, honest, and sincere in his relationship with him.

All schools have their problems and we do not burden the new staff members with these problems. They will soon find them out for themselves without someone explaining the details. We do not talk about the petty gripes that we may have or do we talk about the many disadvantages teaching has. As was pointed out earlier, the beginning teacher or new staff member does not need an experienced professional pointing out the advantages and disadvantages of teaching for they will discover them soon enough.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

Education does not mean teaching people to know what they do not know, it means teaching them to behave as they do not behave.

—RUSKIN

CHAPTER VII

**HOW TO PREPARE
FOR THE OPENING
AND
CLOSING OF SCHOOL**

Two big problems we face each year is the opening and closing of school. Because the opening and closing affect parents and children directly, it should be planned very carefully. It is our responsibility to be well prepared in any event for the unexpected situation that might present itself.

One of our first obligations is to check out the school plant for any potential hazards. We should check the playground areas, play equipment, and our classrooms to see if they are safe for children.

We should double check the book inventory list that has been assigned to us for instructional purposes. Crayons, pencils, scissors, paper and other needed school supplies should be double checked so that we will know what we have and what we do not have.

Audio-visual aids are important for the elementary teacher. Before school actually begins, equipment such as film projectors, tape recorders, screens for showing films, record players and other useful equipment should be checked thoroughly so that we feel confident they are in proper working order.

We should have childrens' names that are to be in our classroom written and posted on the door leading into our classroom. We should make certain that we have the class roll and all accumulative records prior to the opening day of school. At the end of the first day we give the secretary or principal the exact enrollment of children that were in our classroom. Now the secretary or principal can make a quick check so they can be sure the right children are with the right teacher.

Another important matter for us to check at the beginning of school is whether or not our teaching certificate is properly registered with the school district and state department of education. We should also check to see if our chest x-ray is still valid from the previous school year. First year teachers should remember that it is good to have your chest x-ray turned into their districts office before or during the first week of school. Also, other medical data should be updated at this time.

It is our responsibility to find out how often fire drills are likely to occur at school along with finding out exactly where we are expected to take our class during them.

We should take it upon ourselves to find out about insurance policies and health requirements. It is also important for us to discuss with our principal the policies of attendance at faculty and P.T.A. (Parent Teachers Association) meetings.

Most of us, whether we like it or not, will be faced with some sort of unexpected illness and we are going to be absent from school. We should secure all of the necessary facts pertaining to the proper procedures in reporting an absence so the district can make the arrangements to hire a substitute in our place. We leave detailed lesson plans for the substitute. Personal leave is another area we should concern ourselves with at the beginning of the school year. By finding out the proper steps to take, should they need to be taken, we will not be desperate should something come up that is beyond our control.

Another extremely important area where most teachers harm themselves is in their dealings with the school janitor. Many of us realize that being on good terms with him can help our classroom operate more smoothly. This is why superior elementary teachers have their class straightened-up their desks, pick-up and empty trash cans during the latter part of the school day. Simply having students put their chairs up will do wonders in strengthening a good relationship between a janitor and teacher. To take this one step further, we should make it a special point each morning to find the janitor and say "Hi". We should take the time to talk with him about the kinds of activities that he enjoys best, along with talking with him about his family.

Exceptionally well-organized teachers, like yourself, send a greeting card home to all the parents of the children that will be in your classroom. This greeting card or letter does not need to be lengthy, it should be sincerely written while stating how happy you are to start school this year with their child as a part of the class. An announcement can be sent home after school has begun that states the time school starts each day and finishes, how much lunches cost and any other special information the teacher feels parents ought to be made aware of.

We should not neglect to furnish each parent with a copy of our office hours when we are most available for conferences. When we give office hours it promotes good public relations be-

tween the parent and teacher while it puts better professional organization into our working day at school.

If teachers notice their classroom is becoming over-crowded, we should inform the principal of the concern. By informing the principal immediately, he can take the necessary administrative steps to alleviate the problem.

We should know when the library period will be for our class. We should know when our class is scheduled for physical education in the gym and we should know when to expect children from our classroom to attend instrumental music lessons. Assembly programs, club meetings and other special classes such as art, speech and creative dramatics are all an important part in the functioning of the elementary school. We should know when and where we can have special activities for our class in the school.

We all should spend a few minutes at the beginning of school each year to mark on our calendars when holidays occur, when report cards and conferences are scheduled and when to expect our pay checks and other special events that are scheduled for the year.

At the close of the school year we should make a list of repairs that need to be fixed in our classroom and turn this list into our principal. The classroom should be stripped of all items and it should be left as neat and orderly as possible. If typewriters, copying and ditto machines need repair, we may include them on our list.

We should evaluate the total educational program that was offered in our classroom for the particular school year. This should be done approximately three or four weeks before the end of school. If we feel changes in scheduling and curriculum should be made, we then go to the principal and seek his advice and explain our immediate concerns for the coming year. Above all, before we go to the principal with our thoughts and ideas, we should focus our attention on the needs, interests, abilities and desires of children and how these changes are going to affect their lives.

On the last day of school, we should follow the day's sched-

uled activities to the letter. All closing school bulletins should be read completely and thoroughly. Teachers should be certain that all student accumulative records, attendance records, promotion and retention lists and financial lists are submitted to the school office. All records should be completed before we leave for the summer.

Any children that we have retained should be listed and forwarded to the principal's office along with a list of those children that have been promoted to the next grade.

On the last day we should function in an orderly fashion. If not properly organized, the day could get out of hand. The day should be extremely well-organized but it should allow for flexibility. We should have all children working on worthwhile learning adventures.

If at all possible, we secure a list of children that are to be in our classroom for the next year. If we get this list before school ends, we may contact these children and show them where their room will be when school begins next year. Also, we should get the addresses of the children that were in our class this year. Some teachers send review dittos home during the summer to help children so they will not forget so much over the summer vacation. Some teachers also send cards and letters to children that will be in their class the following year.

We should ask our principal for the answers to any other special questions that we have at this time. We should check with the principal or personnel office to see if certification requirements need to be met for the next year, and if so, what specific requirements need to be fulfilled.

We contribute and share expenses for gifts that are bought for teachers that are leaving the school district or retiring. If the opportunity presents itself during the final meeting, we stand and express our thanks and give recognition to staff members for the cooperation they have given to us during the school year. We are very honest, sincere, and polite in our closing remarks and we wish them all a pleasant summer vacation.

There are many items the teacher checks into the office. The

following list should save us, the principal and school secretary or department head, valuable time if the teacher makes absolutely certain to check all of the below items before he goes to the principal to check out for the summer. Items on the following Teacher Check-list should be turned into the office and they should be accounted for:

1. Teacher manuals, bulletins, policies, etc.
2. A list of those children retained or held back for next year.
3. A list of those children that have passed to the next grade.
4. Keys and locks should be turned in and properly labeled.
5. Your summer address.
6. Class roll books, receipt books and teacher plan books.
7. List of the various repairs in the classroom and elsewhere that should be taken care of before school begins next year.
8. Room inventory data.
9. Accumulative records.
10. Any other special reports.

After everything has been approved by the school principal, we give honest and sincere appreciation to the principal for his duties as an administrator. These final minutes should be spent in friendly conversation and should end with the teacher saying thank you to his administrator for doing such a good job this year and that we will be looking forward to next year.

This chapter has concerned itself primarily with the opening and closing of school. The suggestions in this chapter are for the inexperienced teacher rather than the experienced educator. Whether the teacher be inexperienced or experienced, we all can profit by having read this chapter.

Those involved in the opening of school for the very first time need all the help they can get and this is why this chapter

has been assembled and puzzled together. Speaking straight to the point, a thorough job of closing school will indeed make a good opening of school for the teacher next fall. Perhaps someday a computer of some kind will take over the chore of opening and closing school and we will simply walk into our classroom and begin teaching, but this would take the fun out of it.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

*Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive;
easy to govern, but impossible to enslave.* —LORD BROUGHAM

CHAPTER VIII

**HOW THE
INTRAMURAL PROGRAM
HELPS THE
ELEMENTARY TEACHER**

We in the elementary classroom should provide each child with the opportunity to participate actively in an organized intramural program that is altogether separate from the regularly scheduled physical education period.

Teachers should make certain that a well-organized intramural program does exist in their school that provides for various skills and building of attitudes that are desirable while strengthening attitudes of cooperation which help children have respect for one another.

The intramural program can be, and it ought to be, a vital part of the school's educational program for it, too, is a total educative process in itself. We may not possess all of the necessary abilities to be able to lead and conduct an intramural program but we should know what a good program entails.

Teachers should realize that a good program must be tailored to the equipment and school facilities that are readily available. We should understand the importance of setting aside a time when the intramural activities can take place.

One major rule that we all should recognize right now, above anything else, is that no child is excluded from an intramural activity because of poor academic achievement. Parents must give their consent before their child is allowed to participate, and this consent must be given in writing.

Varsity elementary school players should not participate in the same sport on an intramural level. They should be used as helpers. Children that do not possess the abilities to participate on the varsity level should not be expected to compete.

If certain children are limited in their natural abilities, a good, solid remedial intramural program should be put into action immediately in order to satisfy the needs of these children. If the remedial program is not spear-headed by the building principal, then we should accept the responsibility and organize the whole operation at once. We may or may not have the necessary abilities as was pointed out previously, but at least we can single out the need for the remedial program to the principal, who in turn, could run with the ball to relay this information to the central administration.

Organized competition between intramural teams can be organized through homeroom teams, teams for each grade level, physical education classes or through groups based on weight, height or chronological age. We realize that intramural teams should be as evenly balanced as possible. If pyramid tournaments, single or double elimination, round robin, ladder or any other type of tournament is used, they should only be used for a definite and specific purpose.

Suggestions for all of us to keep in mind concerning co-educational intramural activities are that various activities may be done during the lunch period or after and before school. If the activities cannot be scheduled during these times, then and only then, should activities be planned during the regularly scheduled physical education period.

We also must realize that many elementary children are bused to and from school each day and that intramural programs can be scheduled during the regular school day in order to offer these children the opportunity to participate.

Another responsibility that we have is to see that our school, no matter what size it may be, participates actively in some kind of intramural program. An interested faculty member should be given the job as intramural coordinator (or director), for the entire school. It is possible and sometimes more desirable to have more than one coordinator.

As a rule, most of us teach our own physical education to our class. We should see that intramural programs include the use of the various skills we have been teaching during our own regularly scheduled physical education period.

Alert teachers keep aware of what is going on in the school's intramural program because they have a responsibility in its success or failure. Every two or three months we should evaluate the program's value. By keeping well informed, we will be better qualified and more articulate to discuss intelligently, the various aspects which make up the superior elementary school intramural programs and thus we will offer helpful positive and constructive suggestions.

We should make certain that children are provided with special bulletins that state when, where and how long a various activity will be in operation. This is excellent public relations and parents will not feel their child is being left out if he has been given a bulletin well in advance, prior to the activity.

The planning of the school budget is very important and being superior teachers we should point out the school's intramural program is vital to our school and that it be allotted funds to be continued.

We should get our hands on a good intramural handbook and we should read it thoroughly. We also should study the aims, objectives and goals of various intramural programs. This will make us better informed teachers, but more importantly, it will make us more aware of what goes into the make-up of a good, quality elementary school intramural program.

Being an alert teacher, we will soon discover that certain activities work much better when performed in the fall, winter or springtime. There are numerous kinds of intramural activities that should be scheduled throughout the school year and this is why we should consult a good intramural handbook and examine its contents from time to time.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

Education is the apprenticeship of life.

—WILLMOTT

CHAPTER IX

**HOW TO PLAN
FIELD TRIPS**

We can develop the educational growth of each of our children in our class (or classes) by taking them on school or pupil-financed field trips. Field trips should be enrichment for the children and the educational learning experiences should be well-planned and properly supervised. We use field trips so that our class will become more aware of the community, state and national setting. The trip is planned with the central purpose being that it will foster and satisfy the total developmental growth of each child in the class.

Field trips are an extension of the classrooms present educational program. Trips contribute highly to the total educational development of the total child. They offer fantastic learning adventures for children in their own particular learning stages, for children and teacher cooperate in the planning. Often we involve parents in the planning and because they become active planners, we further good public relations. Successful field trips should be scheduled well in advance.

We must guide our class in the planning stages by making an outline concerning the material they are currently studying and exactly what they expect to observe while on the educational adventure.

We should consult the principal or the central administration at least six weeks prior to the field trip, and much earlier, three or four months, for extended field trips. We should familiarize ourself with the many legalities involved in the trip and inform parents or other sponsoring groups of the various legal responsibilities. Teachers that plan these field trips should fully realize there are teachers who lack discipline at school, therefore they should be discouraged from taking field trips.

We should determine prior to the field trip the time of departure, arrival, and return. These three are extremely important. Knowing when the class will be leaving school and arriving at the destination and returning back to school is very important for organizational purposes. We have full responsibility to instruct children prior to the trip of the conduct and behavior that will be expected of them.

A letter should be sent home to parents that explains rules and other regulations for student conduct and behavior. Included

in this informational letter should be one specific paragraph which states clearly the entire class and each individual child will be representing their home, school and community while on the field trip. It might be suggested in the letter that parents discuss with their child certain modes of acceptable behavior. This will make our job a whole lot easier and it will solve many problems before they begin.

Again, we should assume the total responsibility of sending printed outlines of policies and regulations to parents. There should be three copies of these policies and all three copies should be signed by the parent. The parent should keep one copy and the other two should be sent back to school. Included should be a permission slip that must be signed by the parents and under no circumstances should a child be allowed to go on the field trip until his parents or guardian has given his consent in writing. Now the teacher is ready to send one copy to the principal and the original copy remains in the teacher's possession.

If extended field trips are planned, the teacher and building principal should hold parent conferences or meetings, explaining in detail all teacher, school, parent and student regulations for the trip.

When we know that our class will be leaving the building to go on a trip, it is our responsibility to see that a notice of some kind is posted where other faculty members can read that our class will be going on the field trip on a particular day.

Another responsibility is to furnish a concise statement and outline of the field trip to the building principal. This statement and outline should be turned into the principal at least three weeks before the trip. If specific arrangements need to be changed, we will have the necessary time to make adjustments and switch gears.

We can strengthen student participation during the trip by having groups of children assigned to certain study phases of the adventure so that all children may gain fully from these group student learning experiences. These groups may be assigned a week or two prior to the trip. All groups should report their findings to the entire class during the discussion period.

The major reason field trips are scheduled is because of their educational value for children. This is why the teacher and children plan the experience together. When they are well planned children feel a part of it and it is our responsibility to make them feel that way.

At least one male and one female from the faculty should go on the field trip. No certificated person should be expected to be held responsible for more than 35 elementary aged youngsters. Under no circumstances should two teachers go on a trip with more than 70 children, unless of course, a parent offers their services as chaperones. A parent should not be expected to chaperone or supervise more than 12 children. Unless parents have had supervisory experience with children, they should not be expected by certified teachers to perform professional duties.

The teacher and principal should check the safety and operating conditions of the vehicles that are to be used for transporting children. We do not assume the principal will check everything, for most principals are not auto mechanics by trade. School district buses are usually checked by the transportation department often but it is a good idea for us to check them also to see they are properly ventilated and other conditions are safe for children.

Using private cars for transportation should be discouraged. If they are used, we should contact the school principal, and together, check to see all vehicles have the proper insurance coverage for its riders. We can call for the assistance of local police authorities for they can aid tremendously in helping to check the safety of cars, drivers and insurance coverage policies. Above, all, we must feel in our own professional judgment that we have provided safe and adequate transportation for the safety of our students. Also, the teacher and principal must feel confident that drivers are adults and they are extremely careful and conscientious drivers.

We do not allow any child to leave the transportation vehicle until we give the command to do so. Children should thoroughly understand that only faculty members can give them permission to leave the transporting vehicle.

We are expected to inform all children that they are to stay

with the group they have been assigned to while on the trip. Children should completely understand they must not yell at passers-by or hold their arms and other items out of the windows.

The entire class should write sincere letters of appreciation to the host of the place the class has visited. We should be the first to write a sincere letter. The letters from the class can be written in long hand but the letter from the teacher must possess all of those qualities of a professional and it must be neatly typed. Extending sincere appreciation never can be over emphasized and we will soon find it a blessing in disguise if we wish to return to the place we visited in the future. As a special consideration, the class and teacher may write letters of appreciation to any persons that helped furnish transportation or others that made the trip more enjoyable.

We should evaluate the trips success and file a complete report of its educational value and submit it to our principal. The principal can then make his personal evaluation of its success.

We should have meaningful follow-up activities and learning experiences for our class after the trip. The trip should be evaluated by the children and teacher as to determine its value and worth. The evaluation should be an informal discussion involving all of the children in the class.

Good teachers realize the importance of dry run field trips. The teacher along with the adults that will be going on the trip, should take a dry run at least one week in advance. Along with becoming familiar with the trip's surroundings and finding out valuable information, teachers and adults will have a much clearer idea of what to expect and they may uncover unseen problems. In the final analysis, dry run field trips make for better educational experiences for children.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

Education commences at the mother's knee, and every word spoken within the hearsay of little children tends towards the formation of character.

—HORACE BALLOU

CHAPTER X

**HOW TO PUT
STUDY LABORATORIES
IN YOUR CLASSROOM
THE EASY WAY**

The elementary teacher is constantly being bombarded with innovations that emphasize independent study laboratories for children. The traditional independent study laboratory gave the child the opportunity to complete assignments and to develop better study habits. However, the traditional study laboratory did not give children the teacher assistance they so desperately needed in English, mathematics, reading and other important subjects. In the traditional independent study laboratories, the teacher often was a policeman, lurking around corners for students that were not studying. The traditional laboratory is currently on the way out and it is being replaced by student oriented study laboratories that involve more individual student participation.

When we seek to provide the proper kinds of facilities for study laboratories, we examine and research a wide variety of different kinds of facilities. We plan in detail for detailed planning is vital if the study laboratory is to be properly instituted.

The teacher establishes study laboratories, then divides them into different curriculum areas. By dividing them into curriculum areas, each child has the unique opportunity to choose those specific areas which meet his personal individual educational needs.

After the laboratories have been set up and put into operation, we rotate through the various study areas. This makes us available to children on a much wider basis.

We make certain to have the study laboratory furnished with the necessary equipment that will meet the needs and demands of the children using it. Study laboratories should be well equipped with a wide variety of instructional materials that make allowances for individual differences in terms of academic performance, interest, skills and abilities.

We should provide for our students an atmosphere where we encourage children to help each other and to work constructively and cooperatively on projects and topics for which there is common interest and motivation. We encourage children to go to the study laboratory as the members of the class discover they need additional information. Charts, maps, slides, scales, magazines, reference books and reference materials, tape recorders,

listening posts and globes (and of course many others), all help tremendously to make a good basic study laboratory for children.

When the class as a whole is working in the study areas of the study laboratory we can, if we choose, assign children that need to find certain information to a specific study area. Once the child is in a particular area, he should be allowed to move freely to another study area on his own for he might have to secure additional information in that area.

Of course there are some children that cannot accept the responsibility once they have been assigned to a study area. We should keep a close check on these children and make certain they do not bother others. On the other hand, there are many students that are very capable of accepting responsibility for their actions in the study areas of the study laboratory. These children must be allowed to select the study areas they wish to work in and they should be granted more freedom in movement.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

An industrious and virtuous education of children is a better inheritance for them than a great estate.

—ADDISON

CHAPTER XI

**HOW THE TEACHER USES
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS
AND AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS
IN THE CLASSROOM**

All of us should be ready for the change over from exclusively using and relying on the textbook to making better and more efficient use of other instructional materials that will greatly upgrade and improve our teaching effectiveness in the classroom. We should know where to locate the instructional materials and we should find out their availability. We enrich the quality of teaching by properly using instructional materials.

In most cases, we are responsible for judging whether or not certain materials are contributing to our desired educational aims for the children in our class. If a teacher is unfamiliar with certain instructional materials, he should get in-service training in the area of instructional materials and audio-visual aids that he is weak in so that he can better utilize his teaching skills and other professional talents.

If a teacher does not know how to work a tape recorder or film projector, we as considerate teachers will take time to demonstrate to the teacher having difficulties, how to use the machine. Likewise, if a teacher does not know how to use a machine, he seeks a competent teacher, then asks him to demonstrate how to use it.

During teacher training, it is usually emphasized that we be aware of how to use instructional materials successfully in the classroom. If we know how to operate various types of instructional materials, then and only then, can we begin to strengthen and develop our inner-most creative abilities.

Interested teachers observe other teachers who are making use of audio-visual materials in their teaching. This includes observing programmed instructional media. We should keep informed about new materials, programs and other kinds of instructional materials and equipment. We should be aggressive to request and ask for specific types of in-service training so that we can learn how to operate complicated audio-visual machinery.

We should be constantly striving to improve our instruction and always be seeking various materials that children will be able to communicate with more successfully. In all cases, we evaluate their effective use in the classroom and their total function as a teaching aid.

A teacher's professional preparation is highly specialized but at the same time it is extensively broad and general. Many times during their training, teachers are exposed to a large variety of instructional materials and audio-visual aids and they simply do not have the time necessary to master their functional operations. For this reason, teachers find themselves spending hours upon hours, going back over and learning standard operational procedures for operating many different types of instructional tools.

We realize that teachers can attend workshops on audio-visual education, television and radio production and that other laboratory courses are available. Each of us recognize our shortcomings and as dedicated professionals, we act to overcome these drawbacks on our own time.

The secret to effective planning often requires the use of many varied materials. Regardless of where the teacher finds himself teaching, there will be culturally disadvantaged and socially deprived children present in the classroom. By using instructional materials that are appropriate, we can cross previously blocked cultural barriers.

Teachers may participate in district, county and state-wide programs for the development and writing of resource lessons. In planning these lessons, we become better acquainted with the possible types of enrichment materials that may be used in our classroom. We soon discover where to find these various materials and how to obtain them for use.

It is our responsibility to see that an over-head projector is furnished for our classroom. Like the chalkboard (blackboard), the over-head projector has a variety of instructional functions. We should see the room is equipped with one and we should use it. If we are unfamiliar with its use, ask someone how to use it. It's as simple as that.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

Education is the cheap defense of nations.

—BURKE

CHAPTER XII

**HOW TO USE
THE LIBRARY
MORE EFFECTIVELY**

The elementary school library is there to help supplement and enrich the classroom and its curriculum. It provides for children, helpful learning materials to aid each child and teacher in the school.

We emphasize the importance of using the library to our students by using its facilities ourselves. We arrange with the librarian to have books on temporary loan so they may be displayed in our classroom. These books, few as they may be, should always come from the main school library.

The teacher informs himself because he is an interested faculty member of the various services available in the library. We may ask the librarian to explain certain basic procedures and other important regulations. It is important for us to know the library's physical arrangement so that we will know where to find certain books for children and special reference books.

It is important for us to make effective use of the library and we should ask the librarian periodically if she needs additional help in the library. If so, we discuss with the librarian how children can assist in the library, functioning in the role as library helpers. In many instances, a rotating schedule should be made so that many children from our class will get a chance to serve as helpers. Children like to be library helpers and it is our responsibility to see that each child has the opportunity to serve in the library.

We should arrange for children to have the opportunity to use the library whether it be for language arts, social studies, science, independent reading, or for other subjects. We should arrange with the librarian for our class to spend at least thirty minutes per week in the library. In some cases, thirty minutes will not be enough time.

Teachers always accompany their class to the library and we should not leave the librarian in complete control so that we can get a quick coffee break. We can learn a great deal by staying with the class and assisting the librarian.

If we do not need the regularly scheduled library period, the considerate teacher tells the librarian at least three days in advance

that he will not be using the library and its facilities. If the librarian knows that a certain class will not be using the library, then the librarian can make better use of the time schedule.

In addition to the thirty minute library period, each class should be entitled to another thirty minute period during the week if the teacher feels the class can use the time effectively. This other period should be set aside so that children may do some of the things they have been working on or it can be used as a circulating period for pleasure reading.

If there is no full-time librarian at the elementary level, teachers should accept the responsibility on a rotating basis. We should also see that library bulletin boards are as colorful as those we have in our respective classrooms and that they are as beautiful and well thought out as the ones in the halls of the school.

Where there is no school librarian, we should take charge and supervise the proper shelving of books. Circulation records should be kept accurate. We should guide children in the selection of books in order to help them develop diversified reading.

We should visit "Book Fairs" when they are announced. By attending these book fairs, we will be more able to help the librarian in selecting new books. When we find good books at the fair or any other place, we should drop by and give the librarian in written form, the title, author's name, publisher and price of any book (or books) that we want the librarian to place on the ordering list. Later, when the librarian orders books in the spring, a complete list of books that we want will be already in the librarian's possession.

We should continually be aware of current magazines and their intrinsic educational value of being in the school's library. We should become better informed on good magazines such as NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, POPULAR SCIENCE, HOLIDAY, NEWSWEEK, U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, LIFE, TIME and of course there are many other magazines we should become better acquainted with during our professional career as an educator.

If the community desires to contribute books to the library,

we should review these books. We carefully screen all of the books before we allow children from our class to read them.

We can work with the librarian by informing them of the topics being taught in the classroom. After we plan a unit we submit a copy of the unit to the librarian. It is a good idea to submit the unit approximately three weeks in advance to the beginning of the unit of study. Thus, the librarian may now arrange materials for the class and teacher that will add to and stimulate the instructional processes of the total learning package.

The teacher is always on guard to insure that books are in the library that meet the reading level of each child in his classroom. This, of course, will mean the library should have books in it ranging from high school and college level down through books for children below the kindergarten level.

If the Dewey System is used in the library, we explain to our class how to use the library under this system. Even if the children do not remember all of the system, they should gain much and have a much better understanding of it.

One very important aspect for all of us to remember is to check with the librarian so as to consider the availability of materials before making classroom assignments. By informing the librarian then certain books can be put out on the reserve shelf for children.

In guiding children in the library, we explain to the class they must make an honest effort to find books and other materials before they ask the teacher or librarian for assistance. If books are examined by children at a reading table, they should be left on that table and helpers will shelve them later.

We should have a form to send with a child that needs special attention in the library. Now the librarian will know this particular child needs professional assistance in the library.

We should ask the librarian if special work can be exhibited or displayed for the rest of the school to enjoy. This will give other children and teachers, parents and the principal, a better idea of what is happening in certain classrooms in the school. This

will also give each child a sense of pride at having his work and something from his class displayed.

Presently there is an increasing responsibility being placed directly upon the shoulders of the elementary child for independent study. We should realize this and the importance of having adequate study carrels for individual children and places for very small group instruction.

We can easily recognize a good elementary library that meets the needs of children if it includes coves and rooms for small group study and small group conferences. Also included should be large television screens, record players, earphones for silent reading and listening, soundproof booths for typewriting, tape recorders and a bioscope. To further meet the needs of children, the library should include a movie projector, over-head projectors, film and slide projectors, televisions, film strip and slide previewing machines and other such equipment that will give added educational support to the total instructional program development for meeting the needs of every child in the elementary school building.

We continually impress on the class their role in the library and the library's role in their academic lives. It is our responsibility to see that children do not have overdue books and that by not having overdue books, they will be developing good, lasting human relations between the class, teacher and librarian.

We should make it abundantly clear to all of the children in the class that noise must be discouraged on the part of all children in order to create a proper study atmosphere. We continue throughout the rest of the school year to develop within the classroom, that we use freedom in the library that is not disturbing to others and that courtesy plus self-control help make the library a happy place to go. These qualities should be developed along with accepting the responsibility of preparing our class for the trip to the library.

Teachers should make absolutely certain their classes are on time for their library period. Often unpleasant feelings result simply because a teacher did not notify the librarian that he would be late.

The library is not to be used as a disciplinary device by the teacher or anyone else for that matter. This is extremely important for us to remember. To be sent to the library must be a privilege, not a punishment.

We must constantly be on the lookout to make sure books are being used in the library. We must realize that it is better to have a book well-used or lost, than to have the book never used at all.

Finally, the good teacher supports the library and its value in the school and constantly expresses his honest feelings towards its functions when he is expected to say something during a meeting or conference. We will soon realize that by expressing our honest and sincere feelings about the library's function, our attitude will soon have lasting effects on other members of the faculty that have not already used the services the library is offering.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

Of all created things, the loveliest and most divine are children.

—WILLIAM CANTON

CHAPTER XIII

**HOW TO PARTICIPATE
IN THE
SCHOOL STAFF MEETING**

Staff meetings have been a long tradition in all phases of education in the United States. Unfortunately, many staff meetings, more times than not, offer very little constructively and often are seen by many as a negative force in the educational establishment. Staff meetings can be a very positive force for teachers and principals that will result in many school improvements. It can be a very powerful force for educational growth and teachers should thoroughly understand that they are the core participants in the meeting, and the meeting's success or failure depends solely on their active participation.

The trend now is for the teachers and principal to plan staff meetings. Because we are planning staff members, we should contribute constructively and not expect the principal and others to carry the burden. So that we may participate to our fullest potential, we intelligently prepare for the meeting by studying the agenda in advance.

If the principal desires that classroom teachers or department heads conduct the meeting, we should offer our professional services. We do not sit back and wait to be asked. We realize that in most meetings the majority rule applies and that our opinion and vote is important and it means very much to the total development of the school's staff.

Teachers should participate freely during the faculty meeting and say what is on their minds. He should feel free to ask questions and to discuss them. If the teacher does not feel confident that he can discuss problems freely during these meetings, something is indeed lacking and we should not feel it is our fault for this uncanny feeling.

Even though it is the responsibility of the principal to see that everyone makes a contribution during the staff meeting, we should take it upon ourselves to contribute and again we do not wait to be asked to contribute.

If the staff meeting is dragging, we should point out to the principal, leader or member of the faculty, that one or two people should not be expected to do all the talking and planning.

We do not gossip during a staff meeting, especially about

other teachers, children or parents. We are there for a specific purpose and we must remember that specific purpose and keep it solely in the forefront.

All staff meetings should begin promptly and on time. If they are delayed, teachers should be notified by the person in charge. Even the principal should be courteous enough to let the teachers know if there will be a delay. If teachers are not notified because of the delay, many become distressed. It is the responsibility of each and every one of us to bring this out into the open for the group to solve if it becomes a problem.

We may evaluate the success of staff meetings very easily. Was the staff meeting useful to all that attended? Was much interest aroused that will lead to further study and more effective teaching? Was there adequate teacher participation on the part of all the faculty members?

We must remember the responsible teacher participates actively in all phases of the staff meeting and encourages other teachers to do the same.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

That which we are we are all the while teaching, not voluntarily, but involuntarily.

—EMERSON

CHAPTER XIV

**HOW TO
BANISH FOREVER
THE FEAR OF
PRINCIPAL OBSERVATIONS**

To be more effective, we are expected to contribute to the improvement of instruction in order to develop a much more wholesome teaching-learning situation in the elementary classroom.

We should make ourselves available at regularly scheduled times during the week so the principal can talk with us if he wants. We are mature professionals and realize that we have strengths and weaknesses and the principal is there not as a threat to us, but on the other hand, he is there to help us and to build on our assets while helping us to eliminate weaknesses.

First year teachers may expect the principal to talk with them about practical lessons and perhaps to suggest to them other techniques they might use in their classrooms. Of course, various other organizational procedures may be also discussed between the teacher and principal.

We should work extremely hard in the beginning to create a favorable atmosphere between the principal and ourselves. Having a good, sincere and honest professional relationship with the principal will help us feel more confident when he enters our classroom whether it be formally or informally.

We all know the elementary principal must observe our teaching and we should beat him to the punch and extend an invitation for a classroom observation.

If the principal is not in the classroom at the beginning of the period of which he is scheduled to observe, do not worry about it, and above all, don't panic! Chances are he prefers to enter inconspicuously during the teaching of the lesson. We simply do our professional duties without calling undue attention to him.

After the classroom observation is over, the teacher is usually called in for a conference with the principal. We do not waste any time and we realize that conferencing with the principal should be completed as soon as possible following the observation. If we avoid getting together with him we may begin to think that perhaps our teaching was poor and ineffective and that our principal was not at all pleased with our teaching. See the principal soon after he has visited.

Points for us to remember concerning classroom observations and evaluations are not as many as you might think. More times than not, teachers do not know what the principal is looking for during the observation. The principal usually observes whether children are sitting at their desks and if chairs fit children properly. Are children allowed to take on responsibility for their own learning by the teacher? Is the classroom atmosphere friendly, favorable and conducive to pleasant teacher-student relationships? Is the classroom properly ventilated and is it kept at a reasonable temperature? Is the classroom neat and orderly? Are the instructional techniques being used good so as to achieve meaningful goals and do these instructional techniques make allowances for individual differences? Most importantly, the principal will be observing whether goals are established by the teacher that are reasonable for the children in the class. These general questions will aid all of us so that we will know what principals generally look for during a classroom observation.

We should be constantly reviewing the educational literature and professional journals. When we find new ideas it is good to talk them over with our colleagues so we can iron out some of the less important suggestions. Teachers soon discover that most principals like to be approached for their advice and are eager to share their opinions on newer ideas in education.

Evaluation is a threat to many teachers that do not understand its purposes. Under no circumstances should we get so busy that we give the impression that we do not have the time for other teachers and their problems that concern themselves with evaluation. We are never too busy to talk with other teachers, and above all, we are never too busy to talk with the building principal. Evaluation is a threat only if we let it be.

We all should try to do something nice for a teacher that

feels low because he has been evaluated. A simple pat on the back, a friendly handshake with words of encouragement, offering to share a new teaching aid, taking his recess duty, offering a ride home after or before school, a telephone call that evening or a special treat of some kind (flowers or candy), all help teachers feel better after an observation.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

'Tis education forms the common mind: Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.

—POPE

CHAPTER XV

**HOW TO CONTRIBUTE
IN
TEAM TEACHING**

When teachers work with children they soon discover they must accept individual differences or they are doomed to failure. These individual differences are what constitute good teachers for they influence each teacher and his unique ability to teach children.

All teachers recognize the universal fact that some teachers have superior abilities in lecturing, others are more effective with large or small groups, others work better one-to-one, still others perform better under many other different kinds of circumstances. Because of the wide differences in professional teaching talents, team teaching is a way teachers offer and utilize their finest teaching capabilities.

In the very early developmental stages of putting together any team teaching program, the major concern for the teachers involved is to consider whether children will be gaining the proper motivation for further study on their own.

We in the elementary school know that large group instruction can be performed successfully with groups ranging from 60 to 125 students, and that two teachers should be able to handle this size of group. Small group instruction can be performed successfully by groups of 12 to 18 children. The small group instruction lends itself much better for the exchanging of ideas. Independent study will be more flexible in the smaller group and we should keep this in mind.

A teacher's planning period is essential if we are expected to plan a day's work for the children we will be instructing. This planning period should be during the regular school day so we will not feel rushed at the conclusion of the day. If we cannot get together during the regular school day, we should arrange to plan together either in the morning before school or after school. All teachers must agree upon the meeting time for the teacher's planning period.

We that are involved in team teaching realize that additional responsibility for learning is placed directly onto the shoulders of the child. In individualizing instruction we should remember to

assign meaningful learning experiences that elementary children can perform.

During team teaching meetings we should express ourselves freely, openly and sincerely so that we can be placed where our talents and strengths can best be utilized by the whole team. We must look at team teaching as a growing experience for us professionally.

When we are involved in the planning stages of switching over from the traditional manner of teaching to team teaching, we should keep our perspective, realizing the change should be planned slowly, carefully and with caution. We should remain sensitive to other teacher's opinions and viewpoints, not trying to run our thoughts and opinions down the throats of others.

Teachers should strive to see that teams are well-balanced. Team members with experience should use their training in helping others that are new to the whole idea of team teaching. The experienced teacher provides opportunities where other teachers can observe other schools where team teaching is presently in operation.

The responsible elementary teacher contributes in developing outlines for subject areas and helps in the writing of revisions along with volunteering his feelings towards these areas of instruction. We are constantly evaluating objectives of the team in order to help upgrade its total quality as a team.

Activities should be well-planned with a balance between scheduled learning activities. There should be a balance between large and small group instruction. The well-balanced and thought out activity will result in meeting the individual differences of children as well as the personal needs and aspirations of the teachers in the team.

All responsible teachers know that teacher planning time is spent preparing, evaluating, gathering and perfecting varied visual and instructional aids that will be suitable for each lecture and learning adventure. We should keep in mind that many guest speakers may be called upon from the present staff, and more importantly, from the local surrounding community. Also, many parents have special abilities to offer to the school.

Being a team member, we should make the decision on whether or not to appoint a team leader or to allow leadership to grow from the professionals in the team. This is a very important decision for all of us to make and we should express ourselves honestly, openly, and sincerely to the rest of the team.

We all realize that children should be trained on how to take notes quickly and effectively. Periods should be set aside for intermediate grades so they can be instructed about how to listen intelligently, take notes and how to make the best possible use of their classroom study time.

The teacher in conjunction with the other members of the team, should be continually evaluating the program they have already put into operation. We make constructive recommendations that will improve and give additional power to the total team teaching program being implemented by its members.

When a school is in the early stages of planning for teaming, we should move slowly into it. One beginning approach for us to keep in perspective is to have an experienced mathematics teacher for example, and a beginning mathematics teacher together. They might possibly be assigned 60 children in a ninety minute period. Another approach could be to combine teachers and classes for one particular subject area, allowing the teacher with less experience to handle the area of teaming he is best suited for and allowing the more experienced teacher to handle the area of team teaching that he is better qualified to do. Still another approach is to have three social studies teachers teamed together in charge of 125 children; this entire group could be involved in small group, large group and individualized instruction in a rotating kind of fashion. Another example of another teaming technique would be three fifth grade teachers working with 125 children, each teacher giving complete attention for which he is better qualified to perform successfully.

Team teaching may not be the answer to the continuous riddle of how to improve classroom instruction for children at the elementary school level, but one thing is for certain, it does provide for and creates an environment that encourages improvement on the part of the child and teacher.

It takes months and sometimes longer to develop proper planning for team schedules in the early stages of teaming. The responsible teacher takes part in the planning and because we have taken part in the planning, we will indeed be much happier and satisfied team members.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

The school master is abroad, and I trust him, armed with his primer, against the soldier in full military array. —BROUGHAM

CHAPTER XVI

**HOW TO DEVELOP
GOOD PUBLIC RELATIONS
THROUGH THE USE OF
YOUR
ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM**

The main purpose of this chapter is to offer helpful suggestions that are practical for the elementary teacher in showing him how to develop good strong public relations within the community through the use of his classroom. It is essential for us to continue to strive for good public relations so that community members feel good about their child's school and their child's teacher.

A friendly letter sent home to parents that informs them on the standard operational procedures of the elementary school should further good relations between parents and teacher. We should invite a group of interested parents to our classroom for a day. But, before these parents leave, it is our responsibility to talk with them and evaluate for them what they have observed.

We are the first to know if a child is doing well in school. When a child does something good or exceptionally good, we must be alert to further good public relations, so we drop a post-card or send a letter home with the child to the parents, stating something to the effect that their child did something very worthy of appreciation.

If something negative is to be said, we should call the parents and invite them to school for a conference. We should never send home negative letters. Only good, strong, and positive letters should be sent to parents whose children are performing well in school. We will soon find that appreciative letters make children happier in school.

In helping to foster better public relations, we study the community and its various organizations. We should learn as much as we can about where our students live, what youth groups are most present in the community, where recreational facilities are, what church is most predominant in the area, what business establishments are doing the best along with what business establishments that are doing poorly. These, along with a whole host of other extremely information will help us become better acquainted with the total make up of the community of where we are teaching.

We should visit industrial places and talk with business peo-

ple in the community. This will help us in our teaching so that we can relate specific incidents of the community to various situations in the classroom. Possibly, we will get valuable suggestions about what people in the community feel should be most emphasized in the school. Also, we may seize the opportunity to have individuals from the community talk with our class. Good relationships between the teacher, business and industrial organizations, should also make it much easier for us to plan field trips.

When the school library is available on certain evenings during the week for adults, interested teachers may offer their services for supervisory purposes or they may drop by to see how things are going.

We should always be quick to suggest during meetings that school facilities can be used by the community. For example, the gym and play fields could be used by the local community as a center for recreation, classrooms may be used for adult education programs. When we are interested in helping others, we are an instrumental agent in helping members in the community realize the extreme value of the school, and thusly, members of the community will protect their investment if they are allowed to use it more often.

We should realize the importance of writing letters home to parents that praise their child. In these letters home, we mention the child's name rather than saying "your child" or "your son" or "your daughter." The letters must be personal, distinctive, honest, sincere and truthful, and they do not have to be lengthy letters. Sending letters of appreciation cannot be over emphasized by this educator.

We should secure the permission from the school principal before we send home any letter. After we have established ourselves as a public relations agent, he usually will let us send the letters home without reading each one. Above all, we keep these two thoughts in clear focus when writing a positive letter home to parents:

1. Is this letter good for the child and parents and is it good for the school?

2. Is the letter good for elementary education?

If we can answer "yes" to these two important questions, chances are our professional judgment is right in sending home the letter.

We should take the responsibility at seeing that special bulletins are distributed to children to take home to their parents so there will be no danger that both children and parents will not miss something that is important for them to know about. Even though we are bombarded with many materials to distribute to children to take home, we must never forget to pass-out these materials. Too often bad feelings result between parents, teacher and school, simply because the teacher forgot to handout the bulletins that were lying on his desk.

A confident teacher, like yourself, may want to send home a questionnaire for parents to fill out. The questionnaire should cover a checking of the various outgrowths parents feel their child has or has not accomplished during the school year.

Many times parents come directly to the classroom to pick up their children so they may take them home or take them for doctor appointments. For the safety of the child, we must insist that parents first report through the school office so the front office records the parents have picked up their child and have assumed the responsibility for taking their child home.

We should continually be aware of our community resources. If these resources are properly used, we strengthen the school's relationship with them. If we need further information, we can secure it from the Chamber of Commerce, Public Health Service, Law Enforcement Officers and many other such organizations will be eager to help us in the classroom. These resources are available and they should be tapped.

When we meet with members of the community, whether they be happy or dissatisfied with the school, we talk with them and not at them. We become good, active and sincere listeners. We are a representative of the school district and teaching profession and we understand the value of communicating with people in the district.

A good teacher realizes that children from his classroom are the best public relation individuals that he could possibly hope to employ. We should promote a good happy atmosphere in our classroom along with creating an atmosphere that is conducive to learning so that children will speak favorably of their classroom and their teacher.

Suggestions for developing and maintaining human and public relations have been sprinkled throughout this book. It is highly recommended by this author that we take the time (after we have finished reading the book), to go back and review it, underlining, circling and perhaps marking parts of the book we feel will help us to further better relationships with children, parents, teachers, administrators, plus many other important individuals.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers.

—ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON, "LOCKSLEY HALL."

CHAPTER XVII

**HOW TO USE
THE ELEMENTARY ASSEMBLY
TO THE
BENEFIT OF CHILDREN**

Since the elementary school assembly is the getting together of the entire student body, we should inform on specific assembly general procedures. It is very important all of us to know that most school assemblies should run from 30 to 40 minutes and children should be aware of the length of it as well.

We should be certain to have the class seated at least three to five minutes before the start of the program. All children should attend the assembly and it is our responsibility not to make children miss because of classroom disciplinary problems.

Usually each class will be assigned a certain section for seating. We should know where those seats are in advance and we should tell the children where those seats are located. The conscientious teacher will take his class to the assembly room and point out the area where they will be seating.

Children may remain standing until all the class members have located their seats and then they should sit down together. They may sit down as they come to their seat. It is up to each teacher to decide for himself what will be best for his class. When we leave the assembly, children in the back leave before the children in the front. We always sit with our class. We eliminate many minor problems by not assigning particular seats to children. Children sit in the area and in the seat provided for them.

The assembly is an excellent learning device. We do not march the children in and out as if they were army troops. The assembly is a positive learning experience for the members of the class, but it will be a disastrous experience if we do not handle it wisely.

We do not let children that have colds and who are coughing attend the assembly. They will disturb the assembly and distract the audience. They may be left in the classroom but it is more advisable to have them under adult supervision in the school's office or library. The nurse's office can be used also.

We talk over fire drill procedures with the class just in case there is one during the assembly. It is our responsibility to make

absolutely certain that all children know where to go in case a fire drill should occur during an assembly.

We should make every effort to see that children who are interested, have the opportunity to participate in the production of the assembly. If children from our class do not perform, they may take an active part in the constructing of stage props or other assembly preparations that require student involvement.

The teacher is the very first to realize that an assembly is evaluated as a success if many children are allowed to participate in it. Of course, there are exceptions where assemblies are solely adult and guest oriented, but generally speaking, we discourage the use of talent that is outside the elementary schools student body.

If children from the classroom are in the assembly, we may help them prepare by letting them rehearse the duty they will be doing in the assembly at least three or four times before the real thing. We should offer helpful suggestions to children during these rehearsals. Too often assemblies are ineffective because their participants cannot be heard by the audience, while it could have been solved if an interested teacher would have taken the time out of his busy day to watch the children rehearse their act. If a microphone is going to be used, we show children how to use it correctly.

We are responsible to inform members from the class who participate in the assembly they should be quiet when they are backstage. They should also be told that they must not be seen by the audience either when they are backstage.

Usually, the Pledge of Allegiance is recited at the beginning of the assembly and perhaps the national anthem is sung by the entire student body. It is again our responsibility to inform the students they must stand straight, tall and sing to the best of their abilities. They should be informed they are representing themselves, their class and teacher when they attend school assemblies. Performing the flag salute each day in the classroom and singing

a song afterwards will do a great deal in helping prepare the class when they are expected to do the same kind of thing under assembly conditions.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

Education is the ability to meet life's situations.

—DR. JOHN G. HIBBEN, former President of Princeton University

CHAPTER XVIII

**HOW TO MAKE
P.T.A. MEANINGFUL
FOR THE
PARENT AND TEACHER**

It is very important for all of us to attend P.T.A. (Parent-Teacher Association) meetings. The purpose of the P.T.A. is to get parents and teachers together so they can work cooperatively for the development of the children. When parents and teachers attend P.T.A. regularly, higher levels of education result and home and school become more interrelated while the physical and mental health of everyone is improved.

It is extremely important for teachers to remember that parents often go to P.T.A. to talk with their child's teacher. Usually refreshments are served during some part of the meeting and the responsible teacher seizes upon this opportunity to circulate and move about the area to talk with as many parents as he can.

We strive to make all parents feel welcome when they come to P.T.A. We make a special effort to see that parents coming for the very first time feel welcome. To make parents feel welcome, we should introduce ourself in a sincere and friendly way. We should not wait for parents to come up to us, we make the effort to meet them first. We may introduce parents to other parents so they can become better acquainted. We should remember that if a parent does not feel welcome at the school P.T.A. meeting, chances are they will not return a second time. This is one reason we write sincere letters of appreciation home to parents that took the time out of their busy schedules to attend the meeting.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

The aim of education is not knowledge, but action.

—HERBERT SPENCER

CHAPTER XIX

**HOW TO CONFERENCE
WITH PARENTS
AND HOW TO
EVALUATE ITS SUCCESS**

The home, school and teacher are the primary agents for each child's development. In order to help the child, we soon become well aware of the fact that whatever happens between these three primary agents affects the child's total individual behavior. So the child can develop a balance between his home and school, we are working positively at developing activities and learning experiences that cooperate between the home and school. The parent-teacher conference is a most effective way of creating home, school and teacher cooperation.

We should realize the importance we play in conferencing with parents. We should also realize that we will have to spend additional time with parents and that we should have a good functional working knowledge of adult psychology and child development. We must secure a good book that concerns itself primarily with how to conduct a parent-teacher conference. This reading will be extremely beneficial when we begin to plan for the conference.

We may corner an interested colleague and practice conferencing with them. Both teachers will profit by this if they role play, one being the parent, the other being the teacher. Characteristics of the successful conference must be remembered. Characteristics of the bad conference should be avoided in these practice sessions.

A group of interested teachers can get together and talk about good conferencing procedures. They may include parents if they so desire and ask them for helpful suggestions about good conferencing practices. As many road blocks as possible should be eliminated before conferencing time approaches.

We should let the parents know the value of the conference. We can prepare a brief bulletin for parents concerning conference procedures and purposes. Also, we may have parents list particular areas of special interest which they feel should be discussed during the conference.

Prior to the conference, all parents should receive a personal invitation from the teacher. This is very important for it promotes a good healthy relationship between parent and teacher.

During the conference, it is our responsibility to see that we

do not interrupt parents when they are talking. We can use the classroom if it is private and we are certain we will not be disturbed. The conferencing place should not be dark. A well-lighted conferencing area stimulates a more productive conference.

We should remember to end conferences when they are supposed to end. Often parents have more than one child in the school so they must keep on schedule. Anyway, we do not keep another conferencing parent waiting when it is their scheduled time.

The telephone conference should be avoided but it is better than no conference at all, provided it is done correctly. It may not be as effective as the face-to-face conference, but it is indeed an ear-to-ear conference and parents do listen to what the teacher is saying.

Sometimes a conference will include the parents, child, teacher, counselor and principal or any combination of the above. We recognize that other professionals also might be working with the child and these people have as much to offer during the conference as we do.

When we use a variety of materials in the conference or display work the child has done, this stimulates and adds life to the conference. Displaying charts, graphs, playing tapes the child or class has made, leave the parent after the conference has ended, with a good and favorable impression of the conference long after they have left the school.

If we feel insecure about conducting the conference, we should ask the principal or counselor for help and advice. Both are employed so they can help teachers if need be, and they should provide valuable and helpful information if we simply ask for it.

Other suggestions for conferencing preparation is for the teacher to have varied samples of the child's school work. Included could be health reports, personal records, summaries of academic and social development and any other questions that will be used constructively during the conference.

We should make certain that each child has an individual work folder. All school work may be in it or samples of the child's

better school work can be in the folder. We have samples of the child's work so that we can refer to it in preparing for the conference and so that we may refer to it during the conference. If we choose, at the end of our discussion with the parents, we can give them the child's work in the folder so they may take it with them.

We must organize a few notes in a checklist form so we will remember to discuss them during the conference. The checklist might include all of the teacher's observations, as in the following:

1. work study habits
2. attitude concerning school
3. human relations with peers
4. academic performance and achievement
5. maturational growth
6. specific reasons for conducting the conference
7. positive suggestions for future improvement

Responsible teachers make certain there are absolutely no interruptions during the conferences as was pointed out previously. Emergencies are, of course, unavoidable.

We should display a neatly printed or type written list of the conferences that are scheduled for that day so parents can see for themselves our schedule. We should also provide chairs and benches so parents that come early have somewhere to sit comfortably. Magazines, books and pamphlets may be furnished for parents to read while they are waiting. Many parents relax before the conference if reading materials are available for them to browse through.

The parent and teacher should sit down together during the conference. We do not sit behind or at a desk. A small table is good enough for our materials. Three chairs should be placed either in the back, front or middle of the room. We soon discover that good rapport results if we do not sit behind a desk during the discussion.

It can never be stressed too much that we should never be discourteous to parents that come on time for conferences. Parents should not have to wait when it is time for their conference. This is very important for us to remember.

We welcome the parents in a sincere, friendly and courteous manner. We strive from the offset to develop a good wholesome relationship between the parents and ourselves. We get to the meat of the conference in a tactful way, keeping aware of the parent's feelings.

During the conference, we listen and respect the opinions of the parents. We must be a good listener and we should explain to the parents the reasons for the conference. Before pointing out any weakness the child has, we discuss the child's stronger assets first. After talking about the child's better qualities, we will notice the parents will become more relaxed. After beginning in this sort of way, we can slowly begin to discuss with the parents the child's difficulties and suggestions for improvement.

We should become a good listener if we are not already one. This cannot be over emphasized. We must listen, listen, and listen to parents! We must remember that we did not invite the parents to the conference so that we could preach at them and throw our weight around. We encourage the parents to talk and we encourage ourselves to be good listeners.

We must steer the conference to focus upon the child rather than on our methods of teaching or the parents personal lives. We make absolutely certain to talk about the child we are supposed to talk about and not about one of the parent's other children. Under no circumstances do we discuss other children in the class in the presence of other parents.

We grab for the positive areas of the parents' words and comments. We should keep an unbiased opinion and withhold any personal judgements. The conference will develop naturally and it is the teachers responsibility to see that basic objectives for having the conference are met and covered.

Diplomacy is an art and we use it at all times during the conference. Above all, we never try to dictate in a forceful manner ideas and suggestions to parents. We should remember parents have their own ideas, opinions and prejudices, and we should try to use them as an aid in deciding what course of action to take. Because most parents already have many fixed thoughts and ideas about their children that will never be changed, we should merely

suggest our thoughts and ideas, asking parents to listen to them in case they wish to try them. We realize the extreme importance of arriving at possible suggestions to the problems. By having more than one solution, parents will then be forced to accept the responsibility of employing the course of action they wish to be taken.

If the parent tells us something we have not heard before about the child, we should use our professional judgment on whether to show surprise when dealing with parents and this kind of information.

Parents are people and they should be dealt with fairly, sincerely and honestly. We do not try to flatter them if facts are unpleasant. We state them to the parents in the most positive way that we can. We will respect ourselves and the parents will respect us if they know we are honest and sincere in dealing with them.

One of the biggest problems that we face in conferencing is being overly critical. We should realize that parents are the last to see their own child's faults, and criticism can be detrimental and cooperative relationships can be destroyed if we are too critical.

The exceptional teacher avoids all arguments. Just because a parent happens to have a squabble with education in general, we should not take offense. Even if a parent makes a sly remark about the school district or even hurts our pride, we should remain courteous and not get angry and lose control of ourselves. We will display our intellectual superiority by letting the parent talk against the system and respecting his right to feel as he does. We must remember that ideas and viewpoints may be exchanged without losing one's temper.

Teachers remember that when parents talk about affairs that should remain private, they are really saying to us, "I trust you." We never discuss or reveal these personal concerns with friends, staff members or even our spouse. This is personal information and it must remain confidential.

We should keep in mind that during the conference we might

possibly see the problem differently than how the parents see it. We should find out what the child's parents are worried and concerned about. If the parents feel they know why the child is behaving like he does, we should respect their opinions and fully accept the fact they have taken steps to solve the problem.

We never try to be overly sentimental during a conference. We should have complete understanding and remain objective about the feelings of the parents when they are told to us. We have our own personal life to live, and we do not take on the problems of the parents. We are concerned about the problems the parents have but we do not worry about their problems.

We must never jump to conclusions. We should give parents enough time to finish what they are saying. We recognize that first decisions usually are wrong. We know that it is best to listen and wait before expressing our point of view on the problem.

When the teacher has the chance we should take every opportunity to encourage the parent to talk during the conference and we should do it honestly. Under no circumstances should we use flattery. It is better not to say anything to them unless it can be said with honest appreciation. We give honest encouragement and mention all of the very thoughtful things they have done with their child. By giving honest recognition for the duties parents do, we will visually see a sense of pride burst from them.

We should constantly remind ourself that we must avoid speaking in teachers' terminology during the conference. We must talk in common every day language that parents will understand. It is extremely important that parents understand what we are trying to say to them. When the teacher with lesser abilities uses teacher terminology, parents resent it and feel as though the teacher is trying to show-off or talk down to them. Since most of us never talk down to children, we should never talk down to parents either. When a teacher is guilty of talking down to parents, he is insulting them for he is under estimating their faculties of intelligence.

If a particular problem is to be solved, we recognize that parents should not be expected to be the only ones to change their behavior. We make it abundantly clear that parents do not

have to do all of the adjusting. The superior teacher discusses problems intelligently, listens actively and then offers suggestions concerning how problems might best be solved. Operating in this way, parents will realize that adjustments are not solely upon their shoulders. The parents and teacher work together cooperatively and both change where changes are necessary in order to solve the child's problem.

It is important for us to take on the responsibility at summarizing the significant points discussed during the conference. Under no circumstances do we end a conference on a negative note. We make every possible effort to conclude the conference in a very positive, constructive and pleasant manner. We leave the parents with statements and ideas that are encouraging for the total development of their child. Cooperative action between parent and teacher is absolutely necessary for both interested parties if any positive outcome is expected.

Since most parents lose track of the time during the conference, we should be alert so that we can end it on time. When the time comes to end the conference, we may simply say, "It has been most enjoyable talking with you," or we can stand, thus signifying to the parent the conference is nearing its end. If the parent continues to talk, we may stand and begin walking to the door. We should always remember that we should never keep another parent waiting.

When we go into the home for a conference, we take the initiative to see the conference appointment is convenient for the parent. Under no circumstances are we to make a home visit without first contacting the parent and scheduling an appointment. We should take a dry run to the house beforehand in our spare time when it is most convenient for us. This dry run will assure us that we know where the child's home is located and it will assure that our arrival will be prompt because we know where we are going. After the home visit has been concluded, we invite the parents to come to school for an observation of the classroom. A personal invitation given by us is good for building excellent public relations with the parent. Of course, this also develops stronger human relations between parents and teacher.

If reports are written up by the teacher following the con-

ference, we should be brief. We should be ethical and highly objective in writing these reports. In the report we should mention the attitudes and contributions parents made during the conference and we also mention the various plans for action that were arrived at.

Follow-up is very important. We should evaluate whether the conferencing was successful or not and if it resulted in positive benefits for the child. We should decide whether or not conferencing should be continued in the future.

The exceptional teacher that cares about his relationship with parents, writes a personal thank you letter to all the parents that attended the conferences. Thank you letters should be very sincere, honest and should express appreciation to the parent for coming to school and attending the conference. This cannot help but further better human and public relations between parent, child, teacher, school and school district.

Truly dedicated teachers can write personal letters home or telephone parents three days in advance to their conference and extend in a very warm fashion that he is looking forward to seeing them. We may write letters home to parents that do not show up for their conference, mentioning that we are sorry they could not come to the conference and that we hope to have the pleasure and opportunity to talk with them in the near future. Usually, when we write to parents that did not show up for the conference, these parents take it upon themselves to call to arrange for their conference within two or three days.

A THOUGHT IN WORDS

There is no royal road to learning.

—EUCLID TO PTOLEMY, KING OF EGYPT

CHAPTER XX

A CLASSIC IN EDUCATION

ADOLESCENT'S PERCEPTION OF FAILURE. Copyright by William A. Kritsonis 1972. Printed in the United States of America. All rights reserved. No part of this talk may be used or reproduced in any form whatsoever, by mimeograph or any other means, without permission in writing from the author, William A. Kritsonis.

The following talk was delivered by William A. Kritsonis during the summer of 1971 at Seattle Pacific College. At the time, William Kritsonis was completing the masters' degree in education and the talk was given before a live audience of graduate students and professors, thus satisfying one of the special requirements needed for the degree. The talk influenced many people deeply and it forced them to re-evaluate and take a second look at their own attitudes about success and failure. It has since become a classic in education.

ADOLESCENT'S PERCEPTION OF FAILURE

Upwards of a thousand students commit suicide every year. They had "their whole lives ahead of them," but somehow, they lost hope. No one cared, they thought; life was not worth living. They asked themselves: "Is that all there is?"

Suicide is certainly the ultimate self-punishment for having failed. Life was no longer worth the struggle, the effort, the will.

This morning, I would like to take a look with you at the concept of failure — at how adolescents in high school and college see it — and what we, as parents and teachers, have taught them about it.

We have all had a part in it and we have all had to come to grips with it and to decide what failure actually means to each of us individually.

Success is important in our society, more important surely, than the desire to live sanely and to enjoy the good things of life which one has worked for. Success for its own sake is valued, valued I believe at any cost, and the road to success rationalized in the name of the great American competitive way, at the expense of honesty and, perhaps, sanity.

The "F" for failure has become so feared that we, in education, have revamped our marking system in preference for U's and E's without revamping our attitudes — attitudes of those who should know.

We are apt to be very objective when we look at our stu-

dents — and we give them "what they deserve" and in doing so, feel very smug. We have given out the material, we have given the examinations and now it follows, as night follows day, that we give out the marks. Yet we forget, that there is much more that a teacher gives to his students, willingly, or unwillingly. A teacher gives an example of how to look at life and at people. And if failure is viewed as the worst fate, if it is something that is given the connotation of shame, unworthiness, and hopelessness, then indeed, we have taught much more than english or history or mathematics.

Adolescence marks the trying period of search which may have the significant effects on subsequent personality structure, on later adjustments in the years that lie ahead. Probably, what brings the greatest amount of equalizing balance to the period of adolescence, is the presence of significant people in the adolescent's life. Since people become so very important to him, it is the importance of *some* people who have that ingredient of compassion who can help the adolescent come through this unfolding, transitional period, into the fullness of adult life.

The world is full of people who are fearful that they will fail at some task or goal, and who usually manage to avoid trying for what they want because they construe failure as the worst of all possible crimes.

In the study done by Atkinson, it was found that competitive situations arouse two major motives: either to achieve success . . . or to avoid failure. The strivers-for-success were found more likely to be middle-of-the-roaders in their aspirations or ambitious whereas the failure-avoider will be either excessively cautious or extravagantly reckless in the things he tries. Because failure is painful, he will choose either extreme rather than take the 50-50 chance.

In a study done by James Mitchell, it was concluded that feeling of adequacy and success may depend more on self-acceptance than on *actual* achievement. Regardless of their actual test performance, the self-accepting students tended to be optimistic, non-anxious, and non-competitive. The self-rejecting ones were anxious and unrealistic in goal setting.

In John Brownfair's study the subjects were asked to rate themselves on a list of traits as they *thought* they were, as they *hoped* they were, as they *feared* they were, and as they *thought* others regarded them.

The group had first been classified as to stable and unstable on the basis of a personality inventory. The stable group rated themselves higher and there was less discrepancy between their self-ratings and the way they thought others would rate them. They were also better liked, better adjusted socially, less situation dominated, and showed less defensive behavior.

A third study, by Dr. Alan Kohn, concludes that a person's self-picture does reflect the evaluation of him by the crucial figures of his interpersonal environment. The findings also indicate that self-evaluation may be influenced by peers as much as by parents.

Approximately half of those who enter college — drop out. Many are in the highest levels of ability. When students drop out, it usually is understood that they have failed. At the college level, a great deal of attention has been given to the question: "What can we learn about those who have failed in the past that will enable us to reject similar persons who might apply for admission in the future?" Little consideration is given to the question: "What might the institution do to prevent failure, to help remedy shortcomings within the college and with the individual student, which produce failure?"

Reasons for coming to college are always multiple. Stress is usually placed on one or another of these:

- to get a better paying job
- status of a degree
- social life — all my friends are going
- avoid work
- get married or
- because of parents

Many are disillusioned with what is expected of them. Many find that it's the same old thing as high school — all these things *which aren't practical*. Others, who were eager to learn, find that it is not the kind of challenge they had expected.

Many entering students are sorry about the time they wasted in high school. They didn't try hard enough; they didn't apply themselves; they were more interested in athletics, social life, or other things. If we go back a bit, we find that there were many things that they were concerned about during those days — some things which were, indeed, far more important to them at the time than geometry or American history, and which, sometimes were *far more necessary* and pressing in order that they might grow up. But, those who observe the adolescent in high school are very often unaware of what he is facing and are not able to understand why he can't buckle down. What they can't understand is that the reason is — that there are many things the adolescent is trying to accomplish and schoolwork often provides him with no stimulation, no incentive for interest or involvement. School is just a bore! And teachers are a bore! And adults, in general, are a bore! Adults are forever talking but what they say often doesn't seem to *mean* anything.

A new interest can be sparked in school when there is a teacher who does mean something. But it takes more than one teacher to make a school program relevant. When competition and success are the significant ingredients of a program, then we are apt to be creating egocentric (or self-centered) intellectuals who gloat over their achievements as they look down on those who have successfully developed feelings of worthlessness because — they have lost and lost and lost, and fear that they will probably never win — and only those who win are important.

Our task ought to be to help the adolescent to see that failure is neither good nor bad. It is, however, an inevitable fact of reality. The way we use it in our lives will determine, ultimately, its goodness or badness for *us*.

Each of us must learn to live with certain limitations in ability. It is only when an individual falls consistently below the norm areas that *seem* important to him, that inferior ability constitutes a serious limitation.

From studies of both high and underachievers in high school, the pattern of the relationship between self-concept and achievement becomes clearer. There is a relationship between positive

self-concept and high achievement, negative self-concept and under-achievement. The research does not indicate which is cause or effect. Chances are we can see a circular pattern beginning earlier with perception or experiences. "Every experience, says Ruth Stang, contributes to the adolescent's evolving picture of himself, which, in turn, becomes a guide to future action.

Parental pressure for success seems to arise naturally out of a parent's desire that his child must have the best that the world has to offer, yet . . . in the same breath, it may be that many of them see the failure which their son or daughter may face as a failure for themselves. Many parents want their children to be a credit to them, forgetting that if a child is a credit to itself, the other will follow naturally.

Likewise, it is not important to be better than the next guy so much as it is to try to do our best. *We* should be our own chief and best competition. We cannot always achieve our goal, but we ought to find satisfaction in knowing we did the best we could. Too often, we are teaching the idea of striving for success in high school, in college, in athletics, in all the aspects of living, for the *wrong* reasons. Let's change our own attitude about success and failure.

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